

SECTION 18.05 TELECOMMUTING GUIDELINES PUBLISHED

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http://www.das.hre.iowa.gov/html_documents/ms_manual/18-05.htm

Telecommuting – A pre-approved arrangement to work at a location away from the employee's regular work site. The telecommuting location may be the employee's home or another office. The location may or may not be connected to the employee's regular work site by means of computer equipment or telephone. The frequency of telecommuting may vary.

Changes in the availability and sophistication of information technology have made alternative work scheduling more feasible, as employees strive to reconcile their competing personal and professional needs. At the same time, employers are finding office costs rising and office space limited. Consequently, many employers are finding that telecommuting is one answer to some of the concerns of today's office setting.

Here are some of the potential benefits for both employers and employees:

- It assists employees in balancing their work life with their personal life.
- It boosts employee morale—an important motivational factor.
- It decreases absences by alleviating some personal scheduling conflicts.
- It increases the opportunity for an agency to retain valued employees, thereby reducing turnover and the costs of training new employees.
- It saves on office space and related overhead costs.

STATEMENT OF INTENT:

It is the responsibility of the Appointing Authority of the Department to determine whether telecommuting will be implemented for the Department and if so, under what circumstances. The following factors should be considered when reviewing telecommuting requests: operational needs including service to customers; productivity; costs; benefits; adaptability of job responsibilities; and the employee's ability to work independently.

Telecommuting should result in benefits to the department as well as to the employee. Telecommuters are accountable to the department so that the costs are proportional to the benefits gained.

On a non-telecommuting day, including periods of severe weather or emergency closing, the telecommuting employee may not choose to work at the telecommuting site and receive pay for work at the site unless supervisor approval is received in advance or prior to any work performed at the site.

Use of telecommuting must not negatively impact operations, including delivery of services to customers, nor should it decrease productivity or significantly increase costs to the department. If it is found that telecommuting violates any of these restrictions, management should deny or withdraw permission to telecommute.

PROCEDURES:

- A. An employee who wishes to telecommute shall complete the "*Telecommuting Application*" form and submit it to the employee's immediate supervisor.
- B. The immediate supervisor shall review the request in accordance with this policy. The supervisor will:
 1. Consult with information technology staff regarding automation or communication needs identified in the application.

2. Contact other affected supervisors regarding any request for shared office/equipment arrangements proposed in the application to assure that such arrangements meet with their approval.
- C. The immediate supervisor shall complete the section of the application entitled "*Supervisor's Comments.*"
- D. The application is subject to the approval of the department director or their designee.
- E. Before approval to commence telecommuting is granted, a current performance evaluation for the employee must be on file. Also, the employee and immediate supervisor shall enter into a written "Telecommuting Agreement" to assure that both parties understand and agree to all job expectations during telecommuting. The agreement should address the following:
1. Duration of agreement.
 2. Telecommuting location (e.g., home, specified office).
 3. Telecommuting day(s) of the week.
 4. Work schedule for both telecommuting and non-telecommuting days, including meal periods. A work schedule for a telecommuting day may consist of both core work hours and work hours that are scheduled at the employee's discretion.
 5. Whether the employee may telecommute on a non-telecommuting day if circumstances would inhibit travel to the normal work site and how, when and by whom that decision may be made.
 6. Equipment needs for telecommuting (e.g., personal computer, printer, modem, software, phone line, WATS service, telephone, desk, files, supplies, chair), including who is responsible for providing the equipment and paying for installation, maintenance and any necessary repairs.
 7. Responsibility for utility costs (e.g., local and long distance phone service/calls, electricity) at the telecommuting site.
- F. The telecommuter and the telecommuter's supervisor will be required to submit "*Status Report*" to the next higher management authority each quarter.